

**RESEARCH AT THE WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION**

**BRIEFING PAPER**

Prepared for the

June 2002 TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING

Prepared by

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**PURPOSE:**

This is an informational presentation regarding the Research Program sponsored by the Department and the benefits obtained from that program.

**ACTION/OUTCOME:**

The Commission will not be required to take action. The expected outcome is to provide the Commission with an understanding of how the Department's Research Program functions, the benefits to the Department and the public from that program, and how the program interacts with the technology programs of other states, federal agencies and universities.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Department has maintained a program of applied research for many years. This program addresses problems and opportunities of direct interest to the regions and technical staff of the Department in areas such as: water quality, endangered species protection, bridge and pavement design and maintenance, highway safety, traffic operations and intelligent transportation systems, data collection and analysis processes, and traveler information systems. The Research Office, within Planning and Capital Program Management, develops and manages this program. Primarily, universities conduct the research, although federal agencies and private research organizations are also accessed. This is one of the ways that WSDOT is improving its service delivery to the public.

**DISCUSSION:**

Research results can often be of significant benefit to the Department's programs. Specific examples regarding steel bridge fatigue and improved pavement construction practices with significant cost savings implications will be described. Other states, the Federal Highway Administration, the Transportation Research Board (TRB) and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) have related programs that also benefit WSDOT programs and are effectively accessed through our Research Program.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Not Applicable.

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